

THE QUAKER.

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SERMON BY THOMAS WETHERALD, AT GREEN STREET MEETING, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1827, DURING THE YEARLY MEETING.

It is an incontrovertible truth, my friends, and it is a truth which bears conviction with it, on every reflecting mind, that any external evidence whatever—nay, that all external evidence combined, never made a follower of God in the resurrection; that it never made any one a partaker of the spirit and power of love. For no stream can rise higher than the fountain. External evidence may lead to the observance of external laws, and may produce external laws; and by external evidence operating upon the outward senses we can distinguish many natural and valuable truths and properties, in natural things.

I have been led to look a little into the composition of man as he is found in the works of the Creator. He is not a mere animal. Man is composed of an animal body, and has animal passions and propensities in common with other animals—he is supported as all the rest of the animal creation are, by food and drink. The race of mankind are propagated as other animals are, and we die as they die.

But there is a part of man, and this constitutes his excellency, which is allied to the divinity—it is spirit. It

is not lost in the lapse of time ; it does not fall with the fall of these animal bodies.

It has often been said and remarked, by those who were endeavouring to persuade themselves that all things come by nature, or that there is in matter something which produces all these created objects—and those who have been endeavouring to form systems for themselves have supposed, that the mind dies with the body ; and they have been endeavouring to persuade others so, from the circumstance that as our bodies fail, the perceptions of the mind with regard to outward things decrease—that our faculties are said to fail—that men are frequently found in a state of what is called childishness, or second imbecility. But, my friends, this does not prove that the mind is decaying ; but it proves a decay of those organs of the body which convey intelligence of external objects to and from the mind ; and when these organs of the body which convey intelligence to and from the mind—when these have fulfilled their office, they are numbered with their native dust. The soul then revolves upon itself, and the communication of external objects is broken off ; and if it has remained pure, and has been preserved uncontaminated by the influence of evil indulgences, it from thenceforth centres in the bosom of its father, the universal God. But if, on the contrary, they have suffered the body to be contaminated—if the soul has indulged and perverted those propensities to gratify the animal creature—if these have constituted the joys of our heaven ; when these organs which convey intelligence of external objects to the soul shall decay—when in this awful state, the soul comes to revolve upon itself, and its own impurities, the spiritual faculties remaining unimpaired, the punishment of this soul is spiritual.

I am not about to frighten any individual with an account of lakes of fire and brimstone, and of the torments of devils in animal, beastly, and imaginary shapes; for that which can torment the spirit must necessarily be of a spiritual character. And if we are in a state of impurity when unclothed of mortality, we must remain in a state of darkness, and a state of confusion, because we are separated from the source of light, of life, of power, of wisdom and of knowledge—of love, of charity, and of all the heavenly attributes which are the distinguishing characteristics of a God; we are not prepared to be influenced by these, for while clothed upon with mortality we have not cultivated them, and we are placed here for a season, that we may cultivate these heavenly dispositions and virtues, that we might come immediately unto God, the Judge of all, and the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. For we are not now called unto Mount Sinai, to a legal dispensation dependent on external evidences as that law was. For we may remember that when Moses was sent to the children of Israel he was commanded to tell them, “I AM THAT I AM hath sent me;” and if they doubted of his mission, then signs were to be given; and one was this—“the Lord said unto Moses, Put now thy hand into thy bosom; and he put his hand into his bosom; and when he took it out, behold, his hand was leprous as snow. And he said, Put thy hand into thy bosom again. And he put his hand into his bosom again, and plucked it out of his bosom, and behold, it was turned again as his other flesh.” And if they would not attend to the voice of the first sign, he was to give them another. “And the Lord said unto him, what is that in thy hand? And he said a rod. And he said, cast it on the ground; and he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent, and

Moses fled from before it. And the Lord said unto Moses, put forth thy hand and take it by the tail; and he put forth his hand and caught it, and it became a rod in his hand."

These were evidences which were applicable to the external senses, and applicable to an external law; for every evidence which is full and conclusive must be in accordance with the nature of the subject which we are investigating, or placing dependence upon. And therefore, my friends, if we ever come to the true nature and spirituality of the gospel dispensation, it must not be by a dependence on external evidences, but upon those which are purely internal and spiritual. For, as we have animal faculties and propensities, so also, as we have souls which are of a spiritual character, these have spiritual propensities and faculties, and these are in their nature capable of coming to an acquaintance with God, and of blending body, soul, and spirit into the same likeness; that is, into the likeness of purity, holiness, love, and all the divine attributes. And it is by the operation of these spiritual faculties upon those which are animal and instinctive, through the organs of the body, that the faculties of reason are produced. But these rational faculties and this combination, such as man is considered, are not able, with all their utmost stretch of power, to give us a knowledge of God. They will enable us to dive far into arts, sciences, philosophy, and a knowledge of natural things—they may confer on us the power of speech, whereby we can compare ideas, and do that upon which many of the comforts of life are depending; but they cannot raise us to any situation higher than themselves; for I want it to be impressed upon each of our minds, that no stream can rise higher than the fountain; and, therefore, if we are

depending on our rational faculties for that knowledge of God, which is life eternal, we shall undoubtedly fall short of the mark.

A dependence on these may lead us to the formation of systems, and to the adaptation of these systems to our various opinions. It may enable us to fulfil all the rituals of an outward dispensation, whether under the denomination of Papists, Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Unitarians, Baptists, Methodists, or Quakers. But it is a limited principle, a sectarian principle, which leads to the indulgence of opinions, and sets the passions at work to support them; and in order to have something over which they can predominate, over which they can rule, over which they can exercise dominion and arbitrary power. And this is the root and ground of all the persecutions which have taken place in the world, since the first foundation of it, with respect to religion. Men have been pursuing their own opinions, and they have been esteemed by their ingenuity as teachers of the law of God, and they have thereby intended to bind the consciences of their fellow men. And hence it is, that religion has had a tendency to banish true righteousness from the face of the earth, when these systematizers have been dependent on the opinions of men, and upon the utmost stretch of the rational faculties, aided by the literature of ages.

Now, my friends, whilst we are thus under the influence of opinions, dogmas, and legalized religion, we are nothing better than the Jews were, for all will be in accordance with the systems that produced them; for let it be remembered through the whole gradation, that no stream can rise higher than its fountain: and these offerings are not acceptable to God, the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ; for God is a Spirit, and the offerings which he looks for are offerings of a spiritual nature. For thus

saith the high and holy one, who dwelleth on high—
“The heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool :
where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is
the place of my rest? For all these things hath my hand
made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord : but
to this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a
contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.” God looks to
those who are of a right spirit—to the humble and con-
trite ones. But when we suffer the rational faculties to
fulfil their proper stations, and when we are willing that
God should reign and rule in our spirits, whose right it
is, here the understanding governs the passions, affections,
feelings and lusts; and these are kept in subjection. If
we look at the situation of the human family, it may be
considered a lively figure of this fact. The command that
the woman should be in subjection to the man in that
passage, has only an allusion to this peculiar circum-
stance; for whether in the male or the female, these affec-
tions, passions, and lusts, should be regulated by a supe-
rior power of judgment, which is of a more spiritual cha-
racter; and as the spirit of God rules and governs in the
male and female, the masculine part becomes predomi-
nant, and that which is more tender and feeling acts as an
auxiliary; and in this holy communion they become help-
mates to each other, for otherwise the asperities and
natural roughnesses in the disposition, might be indulged
under the exercise, perhaps, of a judgment which had
degenerated into despotism. And, on the other hand,
the soundness of the judgment would guide those tender
feelings, and thus produce a holy union in which they
become helpmates. Our whole constitutions are beauti-
fully dependent, one on another, in order to produce a
holy communion and harmony in the operations of soul
and body. And if God is glorified by our spirit, if we

keep it holy and pure to him, all our actions will partake of the same dispositions; and this leads to a fulfilment of the law, and not only the law, but the gospel dispensation also. For it was written in the promulgation of the outward law—and this is all the excellency that ever belonged thereto—“Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength.” And our Lord Jesus Christ, in allusion to the promulgation of the law, declared—“This is the first commandment; and the second is like, namely, this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself—on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” And in these consists the excellency of the gospel dispensation also; for, said he, in another place—“A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.”

And he so loved us, that he was willing to give up his natural life in support of the testimony of universal love, and universal dependence on the God of all power, which he preached unto his disciples; and it was an evidence unto them—and he sealed it even with his precious blood—that they should not be looking for the safety of their natural lives, when their duties to God and each other were concerned.

It was a great and glorious example which we boast of; but, alas! in this boasting we have perverted the design and intention thereof. Many thousands have endeavoured to throw the punishment of their sins upon Christ, and have been depending on the blood shed without the gates of Jerusalem as an atonement for their sins; but vain and futile are such ideas; they have their origin in ignorance, superstition, and spiritual idleness; and it is because we

are not willing to work daily for our daily bread, and to know a purification effected in our souls, from those things which have a contaminating influence upon them; and, therefore, we are willing to throw our dependence and hope, false as they are, on the righteous Jesus; we are willing that he should bear the punishment for our sins, while we adopt unto ourselves his righteousness as our own. This would be rendering God unjust. But, if we ever experience the atoning influence of his life—for the blood is the life—it must be by coming under the baptism of that wherewith he was baptized. And what was this baptism? Was it not the suffering that he experienced from the contradiction of sinners against him? Was it not the suffering which he experienced from the combined powers of the false and legal religions which many of us under different forms are placing our dependence on? For, my friends, it is the professors of religion that have not stood in the power of God, who are the greatest enemies to righteousness. Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, these were the priests who were to minister near the altar, and yet these brought down judgments upon the congregation. And, in all ages of the world, if there is truth in history, we know that it has been the heads of society who have led the people into error—it is they who have formed systems and adopted creeds and opinions as the standard of faith and practice, and who have endeavoured to instil them into the minds of the people, forgetting that every evidence should be of the nature of the subject which is endeavoured to be instilled.

The gospel dispensation is purely of a spiritual character, and yet it has been made to depend on evidences inferior to itself; and, in order that mankind might not see nor feel the inconsistency which this step would produce, it was concluded, in priestly iniquity, cunning and pride,

to declare to the people that the religion of the gospel was involved in mystery—that it must be believed, but that it could not be understood. Here was another invention of man while not under the influence of the spirit of God; and this was another link added to the chain, whereby the consciences of the people were to be held in miserable bondage. But it is a moral impossibility to believe any subject which we cannot comprehend nor understand; for all right belief is founded on evidence in accordance with the nature of the subject which is to be believed, or which is presented for our belief. And I want us, therefore, in our investigation of spiritual things, to bring spiritual evidence to prove spiritual truths. Let us attend to spiritual reflections, and not be looking to the scriptures, and to the systems of men, and to the words of preachers; for all these being of an external character can only form an *ignis fatuus* which “leads to bewilder and dazzles to blind.” Yet this is the *summum bonum*, or light and power, which many are depending on.

A comparison has struck my mind since standing among you, which may be illustrative of my views in relation to the scriptures of truth, and all other external evidence. They may be compared to the light of the moon and lesser luminaries; and they are, unto the spirit of God, what the moon and smaller planets are to the sun. The moon and other secondaries shine by borrowed light, and if the sun does not illuminate them, they must remain opaque bodies. And so, if the scriptures of truth are to be considered the *summum bonum*, or word of God, which we take for our rule of faith and practice, we must grope in darkness till the light of God shall remove the veil. The moon has no light at all; it can only reflect it from the sun—and like a man seeing his face in a glass, it is not to the face that he is looking, but to the reflection. The

reflection of the sun upon the dark body of the moon, affords a beautiful illumination, in which we rejoice, and which has a tendency to raise the mind to that God, who thus dispenses his blessings around us. And we may compare the lesser luminaries to lesser evidences.

Not a leaf that falls, not a blade of grass that grows, not an insect that we tread upon, not a bird that flits the air—nay, from the leviathan in the deep to the smallest work of creation—all these bear evidences of the nature and power of the Divinity! They bear upon them the stamp of the work of God! But these are all external and of a secondary nature—they have not any operative principle in themselves, to produce or sustain life; and if not for the operation of the spirit and power of God, these never would have had an existence, any more than the sun will give us light in the night season, or the moon and stars without the illuminating influence of the sun, which was made to rule the day.

And, therefore, I want us to come, in the first place, to the sun—the light, and life, and power of God in ourselves. For as it was this which created the worlds and all their furniture, the same outstretched power supports and sustains us: and it is this which gives us every faculty that we enjoy, whether of soul or body, that they may be exercised to the glory of God, and our own soul's solid peace. And while we thus exercise them, we can come immediately to God, the Judge of all.

We are not called to come unto Mount Sinai, to an external testimony, to an external evidence. We are not called unto Mount Sinai, to blackness, and darkness, and tempest, and scenes of confusion; nor to “the sound of a trumpet and the voice of words; and which voice, they that heard entreated that the word should not be spoken unto them any more, for they could not endure that which

was commanded.” “And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake.” But we are called through all these things to place our dependence on something which is not involved in darkness, blackness, tempest, and confusion of empty sounds; we are called to come immediately “unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly, and church of the first born, which are written in heaven; and to God, the Judge of all; and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.”

And what is this blood? Is it not the life and spirit of God which has entered into man—for blood is life, as the scriptures declare; and, as blood is the circulating medium which gives vitality to the whole system, it is therefore a beautiful symbol of the divine light, or life, which circulating through the whole soul, produces vitality therein; and, in accordance with the divine nature, it leads to a life of purity and holiness, and to a life of universal love, and a life of universal charity. And in this state we shall delight to indulge in cultivating a heavenly soil—in the cultivation of heavenly dispositions; and thus we shall come under the power and influence of evidences, internal and spiritual, which will operate immediately upon our spirits. And here we shall know the axe laid to the root of every corruption in our own souls, and to “the root of every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit; and they will be hewn down and cast into the fire.”

For, my dear friends, there are none of us—blessed be the name of Israel’s God—that can escape his judgments: none of us can do evil and not feel the effects of it upon our own minds. We cannot lie, swear, steal, or injure

our neighbour—we cannot become drunkards, we cannot do any thing which is in itself wrong, but this divine and living power lifts up the standard in our minds, and begets sorrow, trouble, and confusion, as a punishment for our sins; and, as we avoid these sins, it preaches peace to our souls; and this is the preaching of the everlasting gospel, in truth and verity. It is the preaching of the light, life, and power of Christ, which declares our duty unto us, and makes known those things which are required at our hands.

And as we attend to the opening of this principle, and to the manifestations of this principle, it will not lead us into any visionary dependence on particular systems, which the ingenuity of man has formed; for these systems, independent of the spirit and the power of God—these are what have always constituted “MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.” “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues; for her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.” And her plagues will become double; she will experience a double punishment for all her sins; for whatever fruits or evils she is bringing forth, they proceed from a defection from, and a dereliction of those principles of light and life, which are the ministering angels of God to man for good, and which are designed to preach the everlasting gospel unto us—which is “the power of God, and the wisdom of God.” And as it is said in another place, “It is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.”

And it stands not in words—it is not limited by creeds; but it is a principle so universal as to be adapted to the whole family of mankind; and that too, for their indivi-

dual purpose; for it operates on all in accordance with their various dispositions. It will bring the proud and lofty into meekness—it will raise the desponding and despairing into firmness—it can make every crooked and perverse disposition straight, and every rough way in which we have indulged smooth. And when we come unto this holy level—when our minds are brought under the illuminating influence of this spirit, then shall the glory of the Lord cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

And when we come unto this light, and its illuminating influence shines upon the scriptures of truth, our dark hearts will be opened to those truths which are recorded therein; and when they come to be thus applied to our situation, they become a blessing to us, and so they may to the whole human family. For we are not then robbing God of his honour—we are not stealing the scriptures to form systems for ourselves—we are not borrowing opinions from other men—we are not begging from preachers; for a great part of the religion and preaching of the present day is begged, borrowed, and stolen—they are not from an honourable source, and they cannot produce good results. There is a great begging from preachers, and a great borrowing from systems of men, and a great deal stolen from the scriptures of truth. But it is only as the spirit of God illuminates the understanding, that the scriptures can become useful; for it is a true and faithful saying, that they can only be applied spiritually, so as to benefit mankind. But when the sun of righteousness shall send his rays with healing in their wings, then the scriptures, which have been compared to the moon, will give light, and this light will grow and increase “till the light of the moon shall be as the light of the sun, and the light of the sun shall be sevenfold, as the light of seven days,

in the day that the Lord bindeth up the breach of his people, and healeth the stroke of their wound." And then, not only shall the scriptures of truth become corroborative testimony, but every living thing that moveth upon the earth, and every thing animate—these will all become preachers of the everlasting gospel. "The heavens shall declare the glory of God, and the firmament show forth his handy work. Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night showeth knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard."

Now, my friends, whether is it better to be taught of God, and to experience the consolations of his children—for it is written, "the Lord's children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of those children"—whether is it better to have the evidence sealed upon our minds by the ministering powers of the Most High, immediately revealed to the opening of our understandings, to evidence of an internal character; or, to continue groveling under opinions bounded by systems, limited by creeds and sectarian prejudices, and thus forming images to worship, even in the chambers of imagery, where the evidence is inconclusive, and incomplete; where mysteries are forced upon us, and where our belief is not founded on sufficient evidence?

O! my friends, why are we yet willing to neglect the fountain of living waters, that emanate from God! For Jesus Christ said,—“Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” But thousands have forsaken “the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.”

Now, that kind of religion which is purely of a spiritual character, produces spiritual results, purely—it does not

operate merely on the external acts of wickedness, but its natural tendency is to regulate the spirit and mind. And whenever the mind and spirit become pure and undefiled, the actions will partake of the same nature; for, as I said before, the axe is laid to the root of every corruption in us; and when the axe is laid at the root, and the tree itself is cut down, the branches must wither, the leaves must fade, and the fruits must be destroyed.

But, in order that these effects may be produced, we must come to know many things; and it is only the power of God that can make them livingly and savingly known to us. And I want us to come to know the declaration fulfilled, "The kingdom of heaven is within you." And this is a truth, which cannot be too often nor too warmly pressed upon us; for it is according to the declaration of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.—In his outward manifestation among the Jews, he made this declaration—"The kingdom of heaven is within you." And it is there we are to look for divine consolations, and there we are to experience the divine judgments for every thing; for there he sitteth in judgment against the offenders; and even at this very moment the judgment is set, and the books are opened; for he dwelleth not at a great distance and beyond the grave, but "he dwelleth with you and shall be in you." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you."

Now, "if any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are. Let no man deceive himself." And if we defile this temple of God, we shall not taste his divine love, but we must bear his divine punishments—and these are not the everlasting punishments by which men have been driven, forced, and frightened into religion.

"For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven, against

all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness. Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them." And in this law the express declaration of scripture is fulfilled. "Thine own wickedness shall correct thee; and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know, therefore, and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee."

And when we come to feel that our iniquity has reproved us, and that our backslidings have corrected us, then we shall know the operation of this law to be internal and spiritual—we shall come to know a kingdom of heaven within us; but there must be a warfare. For it is written, "there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought, and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven."

Now, what is Michael? Is it not the operative power of God—the prince of the angels, love, joy, meekness, temperance, patience, brotherly kindness, charity, and the whole host of heavenly dispositions, which have been cultivated, or abandoned and cast out? And what is the dragon? Is it not that disposition which leads to the indulgence of the evil angels, that are the opposite of those that are good?

And what is the warfare in heaven? It is when we come to know the angel of love to cast out the devil of hatred; the angel of mercy to cast out the devil of cruelty; the angel of temperance to cast out the demon of intemperance; the angel of charity to cast out the devil of avarice; and every heavenly virtue to cast out its opposite vice, and reinstate itself in power and dominion.

Now, these are the angels of God; and "are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who

shall be heirs of salvation?" And coming under the influence of these angels, and knowing their enemies to be destroyed, we are brought into a religion which leads to morality, in accordance with its own nature. For religion and morality, under the gospel dispensation, though distinct, can never be separated.

Now, what is the morality of this spiritual dispensation? It is that kind of morality which operates upon the spirit, and leads it to bring forth good fruit, in accordance with its nature.

But what does the morality of the world produce? It produces pride—for there never was a day in which the sins of Sodom were so predominant as in the present day. "And this was the iniquity of Sodom; pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her, and in her daughters; neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy: therefore I took them away as I saw good."

Now what is the morality which has been produced by these external religions, under a variety of names, let them be what they may, from the Papists to the Quakers? Under the influence of pride, men, though professors of religion, and morality too—do they not single each other out as marks to shoot at? Do we not see the duelist, often a professor of not only morality and honour, but a professor of religion also? Do we not see that those who are under the influence of the vilest passions, lusts, and intemperance, will assume unto themselves a kind of morality? But this morality is impure and imperfect, for it is drawn from an impure and imperfect source; it is a spurious religion; it stands in, and is bounded by the wisdom of man, and not of God; it is not limited by the immediate operation of the power of God.

Now let us look a little and see the effects produced by this kind of spurious morality, and we shall find there is a greater degree of evil where it is the more extended. Has it not had a tendency to produce wars among nations, one of the greatest of evils? It has brought forth fruits in accordance with its own nature, and these have been the greatest evils that mankind have ever brought upon themselves. How many wives have been made widows, and how many children have been made fatherless, by the abominable practice of war!

I have been almost my whole life a spectator of these things; and I know the feelings of thousands and tens of thousands in Europe, who, within my recollection, have been separated from all that the heart is susceptible of feeling for; and it has set at variance even the professors of the same religion and morality. The chaplains on both sides are praying for the destruction of the enemy, when they are all heirs of the same salvation, and professors of the same religion. Their leaders and guides have perhaps been members of missionary societies, bible societies, tract societies, and a variety of other benevolent associations, professing to ameliorate the condition of mankind; but these are the corrupt means which they use, and these are the results which they produce.

Now this kind of morality and religion combined, constitute the greatest curse that ever blasted the human family—there is nothing which has ever produced so much misery among mankind as this spurious religion, and its offspring. And I want us to come into an examination of the subject for ourselves, and be no longer dependent on external objects or works; or, on those who are begging, borrowing, and stealing from others, that, which with many is the whole sum total of their religion.

But I want us to come to an investigation of principles

in ourselves, the natural fruits of which will not be those destructive of human life and happiness; and it is high time there was a change.

If we come under the influence of principles which produce love, joy, peace, temperance, patience, charity, and the whole host of heavenly virtues—if we become kind, affectionate, and filled with brotherly feeling, and cultivate all these—this constitutes the sum total and essence of all true religion. For it is “not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.”

Now let us look a little at that morality which is produced by an attention to those things which are spiritual in their operation; for I know of no principle of religion which can be systematized, or which can be adapted to the state of a community. I know of no man—no combination of men—who have a right to form a creed for me. For the spirit of God operating in us individually, should be the alone creed maker and instructor, of every professor of religion, in every act of worship; for this alone leads into a perfect morality, in accordance with its own nature, and it raises man above all external fountains, disarms death of its sting, and the grave of its victory.

And the morality which is thus produced is not to be bounded by any legal restrictions, any more than the spirit which produces it; and as the soul becomes purified by the operation of the spirit, it will produce morality in accordance with itself—a morality which is not forced, and which cannot be misconstrued; for it will bear an evidence in itself, in the mind of each possessor, that it is of God, and that it is the effect of a good principle in us. And the effects of such a religion are operative, producing

love, joy, meekness, patience, temperance, and those heavenly fruits against which there is no law.

I cannot direct you to any external object or substance—nor is there any thing of an external character which may be looked to as a *summum bonum* in religion, nor to any system of religion, for it is not in accordance with the design of the gospel.

The design of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ was to bring the whole human family into the likeness of himself, and that they might receive the same vivifying influence. And it is only as we come under this influence that the scriptures, or any other external evidence, can become valuable to us—but with it, they become correlative and corroborative testimony; and being led by this, we shall come to know what was meant by the declaration of an angel flying through the midst of heaven, which the divinely eagle-eyed apostle saw. “And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come; and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.”

Now what is the fear of the Lord? It is not that slavish fear of death, hell, and everlasting punishment, which thousands of the professors of the Christian name tremble at the idea of; but it is that filial and affectionate regard which a dutiful son feels, lest he should inadvertently offend a tender and beloved father. This fear begets caution, and this caution begets patience, and patience begets watchfulness, and that has a tendency to beget an aspiration for preservation from the Lord, and the Father of our

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Here, then, is a combination of angels ministering to mankind ; and if we refuse the ministration of devils, we shall experience angels to minister unto us.

I have remembered instructively, how it was with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, before that gospel was preached in him, which is the power of God unto salvation, in the day of his temptation, when in that wilderness state into which we, also, are led—a state of privation, dependence, want and misery—a state of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. And that account, I have no doubt, was recorded for our instruction and correction. When Jesus had been thus an hungered, and the enemy presented himself, and said, “If thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread”—what was his answer? “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.”

Here was conveyed a lesson that it was not nourishment to the outward body that he was seeking after, above all other good, but to attend to the manifestations of his Heavenly Father’s will. And in respect to those things which are external, such as provisions for the body, when the soul is brought under the regulating influence of the spirit of God, it will so open the understandings that our external concerns will be regulated by its influence. “Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” “Then the devil taketh him up into the holy city, and setteth him on a pinnacle of the temple, and saith unto him, if thou be the Son of God, cast thyself down : for it is written, he shall give his angels charge concerning thee ; and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone.”

But what was his answer? He was not desirous of

having a name among his corrupt cotemporaries, for being the peculiar favourite of heaven, in that he could be supported in the fall, lest he should dash his foot against a stone, and be injured; but, abiding quietly under the influence of the Father, he said, "It is written again, thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God."

Here the natural desire of provision for the outward body, and the desire of honour and popularity among mankind, were both subdued; and these are great temptations to us in the present day, perhaps the most powerful of any that assail us.

"Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them, and saith unto him, all these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me."

And how many thousands are there of us, who have fallen under a presentation like this; and you, beloved young friends, before whom the world appears in all its loveliness, and before whose eyes it spreads all its joys, rest assured these temptations are the work of the enemy; they are the deceptive appearances of the devil. But Jesus Christ, abiding under the influence of that principle which guided him all his life long, said, "Get thee hence, satan; for it is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." And when the devil saw that all his plans were discovered and laid waste, he left him; and what was the consequence? Angels came and ministered unto him.

Now, my dear young friends, if you receive the ministration of the law of the spirit of life by these angels, and keep it, you will know the same effect produced in your minds, that angels will come and minister unto you. And here we shall know a being satisfied not only with provisions, "for he satisfieth the poor with bread," but we

shall know what it is to be supported wherever we are commanded to go, though it be upon the highest pinnacle. And there is no weapon that can be brought against us that shall prosper, but every thing that is opposed against us shall experience condemnation, whether on the highest pinnacle of honour and glory among mankind; or in whatever situation we may be placed—the arm of Almighty power will be underneath for a stay, support, and preservation, when temptations shall arise. The language shall be plainly understood by us, “Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God;” and if you are tempted with the hopes of riches, honour, glory, and power among mankind, remember the language of Jesus Christ: “It is written, thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.”

O, my dear friends! my soul is bowed, and all that is in me, capable of feeling, is excited for the younger branches of this society—I know what I say, for I have passed through the slippery paths of youth. I have known what it was to go far in the indulgence of passion, folly, and pride—I have known what it was to adopt the maxims and positions which this world takes in its own justification. I have taken large liberties with my tongue, in laughter, in foolish talking, jesting, singing, and a variety of circumstances—and what is worse, my friends, and I am not ashamed to acknowledge it, for it is a powerful enemy that I have to war with, even at the present day, so long and so deeply have I indulged it—and that is, the imagination—an imagination that was easily excited in youth; and I attained it by the reading of novels, seeing military parades, and by giving loose to all those vanities of which I can now testify, as well as of laughter: “I said of laughter, it is mad: and of mirth, what doeth it?”

Under the influence of this imagination I have been led through all the regions of earth, air,—and what if I should say, of hell! I have led conquering armies unto victory—I have preached the gospel in the demonstration of the spirit and of power, while under the influence of this ranting spirit, subversive of good order; but it had its origin in the temptation of the enemy, and was destructive of every thing which bears the name or stamp of judgment upon it. For whatever excites the imagination weakens the judgment. And, my friends, while indulging in imaginations which have presented themselves, there was nothing too bad for these temptations and indulgences.

While the imagination was thus excited, where was my strength? Where was the divine power? Alas! I would not hear its voice, I would not attend to its precepts, I would continue to wander; and in this kind of ærial castle building, days were wasted and nights consumed. And it was not till I was met in a narrow place, where there was no way to escape, that my sins were set before me, as mountains between me and my God—although no man could charge me with a breach of the common morality of this wicked world. But there was a righteous Judge—and that Judge was from everlasting, who could see all the impurities of my heart; and those dispositions which gave rise to them.

Day after day have I mourned, and laboured, and travailed and fought with the enemy—with this imagination—and it has continued to follow me to the present day.

Often have I, in the ramblings of this imagination; led conquering armies unto victory—in arts and sciences I was the greatest proficient of the day—I have preached the everlasting gospel in strains of the greatest eloquence, of men or angels—often have I stood at the bar, where I have rendered myself the most superlatively eminent—

I have placed myself in the most exalted stations, and where the greatest prowess was to be shown—where the greatest marks of beauty were to be seen of every imaginary form, from the giant powers of a Hercules to the softness of a fabled Venus. But I have found that the momentary indulgence of these imaginary things was a waste of the powers of the man; for they destroy the judgment and lead to imbecility; and following the indulgence, cultivates the passions and increases the natural tendency of the lusts, and thus we fall an easy conquest to all that is evil, to all that is disgraceful, and to all that is dishonourable. And it unfits us for the fulfilment of our every duty, whether in a social, civil, or religious view.

How often do we see those individuals, who have given way to the passions of youth, carrying the marks thereof to the grave, and their children after them, who are not brought up in the nurture, fear, and admonition of the Lord. Thus these are led by them, in the steps which they have taken, which makes hard work for the children as well as for the parents. And if ever the children are redeemed from this state of confusion and mental excitement, the parents lose their reward; and if they are never recovered, they become guilty of their children's blood. I have often thought, and I feel it this day—and it is my young friends especially that I want to address—I feel that it would be an awful thing, if, in the hour of righteous retribution, when unclothed of mortality, the blood of my children, for whom I have toiled, and laboured, and whom in my very heart I love, should rise up in judgment against me, and crush me with an overwhelming destruction.

It is an awful consideration! and if we give reins to this imaginary power, it weakens the judgment, and has a tendency to shut up heaven that it cannot rain, and to

render our feelings callous, and build up a wall of opposition between us and the Lord, the living God. Here is an enemy, and a powerful one, with many of my young friends, I verily believe. And my soul yearns for them that they may escape this snare. And what is the feeling which it occasions? It is a momentary excitement of the passions; and in the day or moment of reflection, when your heads are on the pillow, it causes sorrow, confusion, and distress. And, my friends, there is more solid satisfaction, and of this I can also testify, and I want to do it for your encouragement—there is more solid satisfaction to be found in the pursuit of pure religion than in all these excited passions. For it is calm, and when we come to it we shall realize a consolation which the world can neither give nor take away; and which, blessed be the name of Israel's God, it can never deprive us of. And if we come under this cool, calm, dispassionate spirit, in which we can hold communion with the living God, this will open our understandings for the reception of every truth on which we are dependent for salvation; and it will open our understandings for the fulfilment of every duty, smooth the path of life, and in death give us the victory.

It will enable husbands to love their wives, and not be bitter against them; and enable wives to be obedient unto the dominion of this love; and thus it will increase the harmony between the heads of families. And when they are thus united by the power of this wisdom, which is living and operative in its nature, their tender offspring will be cared for; not giving precept upon precept, and line upon line, and rod upon rod; but the examples of the elder, the words of the elder, and the precepts of the elder, it is these that carry correction. Thus they may become a blessing to their children by training them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; and they will have

cause to rejoice in them; and if these turn aside from the paths of wisdom and virtue, it will afford strong consolation to the parents that the wisdom which cometh from above hath visited their minds, and that they are guiltless of their children's blood. I have felt concerned for some of the members of this society—and it is a deplorable circumstance that a writer, almost an infidel, should have said of us, that we followed the things of time—that we followed the things of this world with a step as steady as time, and a craving keen as death.

But may the wisdom which is from above so regulate every inordinate passion, propensity, feeling, and lust, that the minds of these may be able to testify, that there is no consolation equal to the joy of God's salvation, and then will they know the everlasting gospel preached in them, as John saw, and Jesus testified. For the gospel of Christ is that which testifies in us of every evil—it speaks peace for every act of obedience, and opens the understanding for the reception of every divine truth which is essential to our salvation; thus cleansing every passion, purifying the heart, and rectifying the affections—it is the power of God operating in us “both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”

And these will not only see a “mighty angel fly through the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people; and saying with a loud voice, fear God and give glory to him, for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters:” but they will even be prepared to behold another mighty angel “stand with one foot upon the sea, and the other on the earth, ruling every earthly propensity and passion, and every fluctuating imagination, which may be

compared to the waves of the sea ; and when these are all trodden under foot, then we shall be ready to see him “lift up his hand to heaven, and swear by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven, and the things that therein are, and earth, and the things that therein are, and the sea, and the things which are therein, that there shall be time no longer.” For times, and days, and months, and years, will be lost in the all-sufficiency of that divine power and illimitable principle—in that light and life which is infused from God himself immediately into the souls of men ; and which, by the cultivation thereof, will become in these the procuring cause of salvation, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

[Here the speaker sat down for a moment, and then rose and added :]

Although much has been said on the present occasion, I want to encourage my dear young friends, oftentimes to retire alone ; and though, perhaps, your minds have been wandering through the airy regions of imagination, endeavour to call them home, and to rest them upon something in which there is stability, and it will be found a place of rest. And this is perhaps the best medium by which we can become acquainted with ourselves and our God. It is in this sanctuary that he manifests himself unto his children and people, and speaketh in a voice which all nations have heard.

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work ; day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge—there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard.” And if we are willing to wait on him we shall find him ; and if you all will seek, you will surely find. “But

who may abide the day of his coming? and who shall stand when he appeareth? for he is like a refiner's fire, and like fuller's soap: and he shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; and he shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." And rest assured, my dear young friends—and I dare declare it from my own experience—it will wash away nothing, it will separate nothing but dross, tin, and reprobate silver; and it will cause the gold, the pure unalterable gold, more clearly to shine in its own native lustre. And under those feelings of affection—I trust, of brotherly and Christian affection—which drew me from my habitation to meet with you, I can in my soul bid you *farewell! farewell in the Lord!* And as you meet, and when it is well with you, when you are approaching the throne of grace under the consoling influence of the gospel, remember your brother.

very good

